Business Needs Statement

M Squared Strategies, Inc
Blue Raster, LLC
North Highland

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Small Business Administration
Business Gateway

COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE SUPPORT,
Requirements Analysis &
Related Work

Contract Number: GP0024739

Subtask 2.9

Attention:
Shivani Desai

Business Needs Statement: Business Gateway Compliance Tool

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to develop a Business Needs Statement that will provide the basis for functional requirements in the building of COMPASS: an intelligent compliance assistance web resource locator. This tool will be available on Business.gov and will assist small businesses in their search for government compliance assistance information and related forms.

2. Background:

2.1 History:

According to statistics compiled by government agencies, complying with laws and regulations costs American businesses billions of dollars each year. The Business Gateway project was conceived to create tools and services to reduce this burden by guiding businesses through the maze of government rules and regulations.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the managing partner of this government-wide Presidential E-gov Initiative which is part of the President's Management Agenda. This Government to Business Initiative is committed to helping businesses interact efficiently and effectively with the Federal Government. Business.gov will allow businesses a single point of access to compliance information and Federal forms necessary for meeting Federal statutory or regulatory requirements.

2.2 Business Gateway Structure and Elements:

The Business Gateway is envisioned as a web portal, providing a single access point for targeted users to Federal (and eventually State) compliance assistance resources from all participating agencies. Business Gateway is anticipated to provide a Forms Library (currently forms.gov), as well as multiple methods for assisting users to find compliance resources. These include a topic-based search tool, an intelligent compliance assistance web resource locator, and a keyword-based search capability.

The concept of the Business Gateway as a compliance assistance resource has evolved over time. The Business Gateway team is operating based on the following definitions:

- Compliance Assistance Defined: Compliance assistance is defined as information that helps businesses understand their obligations under new and existing Federal laws and regulations.

- COMPASS Defined: COMPASS is an intelligent compliance assistance web resource locator. COMPASS is focused on delivering compliance assistance web resources to small and medium businesses that either doesn't know what Federal laws and regulations apply to them OR have changed their operations, practices, etc., and wish to review the regulatory impact of these changes. COMPASS will provide end-users with related State web resources if Federal agencies have such data. This tool will provide the compliance resources selected by agencies as most critical to businesses who need assistance in complying with their agencies' laws and regulations.

- The COMPASS Value Proposition: COMPASS is the only Federal Government compliance assistance web resource locator intended for small and medium businesses that want an **intelligent**, **easy to use**, **plain-language tool** that 1) makes them aware of Federal laws and regulations that apply to their business and then 2) helps them know how they can comply with these regulations and laws.

Several basic elements of the Business Gateway already exist, either as stand-alone products or as legacy tools. There are also several on-going project activities in support of final implementation of the Business Gateway initiative:

- Business Gateway Portal and Web Site Re-Design: The current Business Gateway front-end (www.business.gov) resides on a single server at SBA Headquarters. The Business Gateway Team is updating the Business Gateway web-site design, including site models using wire-frame diagrams. The same task team has also conducted user inquiries through focus groups and

surveys to collect information for, among other things, developing a Business.gov Taxonomy and creating Business Gateway brand awareness.

- The Forms Library: The Forms Library is maintained separately by the General Services Administration (GSA) and has its own website (www.forms.gov). The Forms Library resides on servers obtained under contract by GSA and uses BEA WebLogic as its application server and portal engine.

- Search Capabilities: Current Business.gov search is provided by the Verity search engine on the Business Gateway server at SBA. The Forms Library search is Oracle based. It is anticipated that Business.gov will have a new consolidated search engine capable of working with all portal content and data.

- COMPASS, an Intelligent Web Resource Locator: Initial work has been done to collect user requirements and prepare a draft Requirements Analysis for COMPASS. This work will be made available to the Developer for incorporation into overall design, development, and integration efforts.

- Content and Content Management: Most content for the Business Gateway will be maintained by contributing agencies. There will be very little unique Business Gateway content. A small content management effort is currently underway using the Atomz content management application.

- Data Harmonization: Data requirements from different agencies differ widely, creating confusion and duplication of effort for small businesses. One group of the Business Gateway Team is investigating ways in which the Business Gateway initiates projects through investment that result in streamlining reporting processes and data elements consistently defined across agencies in order to reduce user burden.

3.   Business Needs for COMPASS:

- This utility shall present the user with an interactive set of questions. Each question must have a predefined set of selectable answers.

- This utility shall be intuitive and easy to use for novice and experienced web users.

- This utility shall have the ability to locate and access critical compliance assistance resources which exist on specific agency websites across the Federal government.

- This utility shall provide value added by alerting users to specific compliance requirements they may not have been aware applied to their business.

- Responses/findings shall be returned as HTML links with description, not entire content.

- Responses/findings should be limited to a manageable number of agency selected compliance assistance resources.

- Responses/findings should be grouped in a logical manner.

- Responses/findings should link to appropriate forms associated with specific compliance assistance resources.

- Users should have the flexibility to change a portion of their answers to see how that would influence the results.

- Users should have the ability to further refine a set of responses/findings.

- Customers should have the ability to save and track their compliance results. This could be done in phases (from saving to a PC to online registration).

- This utility shall have a realistic and sustainable process for developing and maintaining questions and answers (agency content, Federal laws and regulations will change over time).